

BRO NEVEZ

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE
NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S. BRANCH



see page 17

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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Contributions, letters to the Editors, and ideas are welcome from
all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editors.

Ideas expressed within this newsletter are those of the authors,
and do not necessarily represent ICDBL philosophy or policy.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Lois Kuter

In 1991 the U.S. ICDBL will officially celebrate ten years of existence, but work to establish this branch really began in 1980. Thus, 1990 is a fitting year to renew our efforts to support the Breton language and culture. For the past five years membership in the U.S. ICDBL has remained steady. This is not bad, but we should be steadily growing! I have heard from more and more people who know about us and who have seen our newsletter, but these individuals have never joined or subscribed to **Bro Nevez**. We have no support from them financially for our activities. This year we will end with a deficit in our treasury. Either we increase our membership in the coming year to meet growing expenses, or we will be forced to cut back our activities. I have been proud to see **Bro Nevez** develop over the years and I know that it is respected in Brittany where it shows that Americans really do care about the future of the Breton language. It would be sad to see us cut back on this publication in the year we celebrate ten years of support for Brittany.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a membership renewal form for 1990. I hope you will rejoin, despite the many demands for support you all receive from other organizations. Also enclosed is a packet of information--a flyer, press release, etc. Please take the initiative to duplicate these and distribute them as widely as you can. Help us really have something to celebrate for our 10th anniversary.

ELECTIONS

It has been some time since the last election of officers and a board of directors for the U.S. ICDBL. Several board members have expressed a desire to retire, and it is time to hold elections to get some new blood more actively circulating.

In the past, calls for nominations have brought few results. The dispersal of members throughout the U.S. and in Canada has made it impossible for us to get to know each other face-to-face, and individuals have been very reluctant to step forward to nominate themselves for election. To help in getting a good slate of candidates for a new election, an informal nominating committee met in Philadelphia, October 7. We came up with the following list.

Present officers and board members--all eligible for reelection to their present post or to a new post:

President: Lenora Timm

Secretary-Treasurer: Lois Kuter

Board: Reun ar C'halan

Christine Forster Inga (now in Sweden)

Jimm Kerr

Dennis King

Alex Kyle

Nathalie Novik

Other eligible candidates - for either an office or place on board

Bryna Block

David Brulé

Margot de Chatelaine

Kevin Gilligan

Gweltaz Hamel

John Hanly

John Hennessey

Alexei Kondratiev

Joël Le Gall

Barbara Morgan

Jay O'Callahan

Geneviève Ray

Gregory Stump

Amy Varin

Laurie Zaring

This by no means completes the list of persons qualified to be an officer or on the board of directors of the U.S. ICDBL. Members who would like to take a more active role in the future of the ICDBL are urged to add yourself to the list of nominees (specifying the post you wish to run for in the election). **The deadline for nominations: January 1, 1990.** This is also the deadline for declinations if anyone listed above refuses to be a candidate; for those who agree to be a candidate, we need to know whether your nomination is to be for one of the offices or for the board. Based on responses, a ballot will be put together and mailed with the February 1990 newsletter.

The ICDBL has grown to center its activity on the publication of the newsletter, Bro Nevez (New Country). Since this does not require a great deal of difficult decision-making or policy-making, the jobs of the officers and board are not at present very demanding in time or energy. However, it would be wonderful to see the ICDBL become more active--something that could happen with a more dynamic board of directors. The U.S. Branch of the ICDBL began operation in 1980 and was officially incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1981, so we have a 10th anniversary to celebrate. What better way than with the election of officers and a board who will work to build membership and strengthen our support of the Breton language and culture. Basic duties are as follows:

The PRESIDENT is the chief representative for the U.S. ICDBL in our network of members and in an international network of ICDBL branches and Breton and European language and cultural organizations. The President should be familiar with all activities of the ICDBL--the newsletter or any other projects individual members may initiate. A knowledge of French (or access to a translator) is very helpful in this position in communicating overseas and in keeping informed of events in Brittany. Ideally, our President would also know some Breton, but this is not critical to representing the ICDBL even if it is symbolically interesting.

The SECRETARY-TREASURER has the real work position with the responsibility of keeping accurate records of our activities and finances. This person prepares financial reports and keeps the board informed of major expenditures that might need their approval. This person also serves as a liaison between the officers and the board in keeping everyone informed of problems or matters that need some guidance. Like the President, the Secretary-Treasurer is also active in correspondence with other ICDBL branches and Breton organizations in Brittany. In the past, this individual has also been the main contact for general inquiries about the ICDBL--responding to information requests.

Note: Since most of the expenditures for the ICDBL have been related to the newsletter, my role as editor and producer of this quarterly publication has meant that it has been easy for me to keep the treasury and a check book. But, there is no reason why this position cannot be taken over by someone else who has good organizational skills and who is willing to take on the small responsibility of processing membership checks and making sure reimbursements are made for expenses. The "job" of Secretary-Treasurer has been defined in the past by my particular abilities and initiatives, but the ICDBL would survive very nicely if another individual were to take over--leaving me more time to work on the newsletter and promotional work as well as correspondence for the ICDBL. LK

The six members of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS are responsible for guiding policies and keeping us on-track in our work to support the Breton language and culture. Members of the Board should have a knowledge of what is happening in Brittany in order to judge the effectiveness of our work here. But, the most important quality for Board members is a good dose of common sense and the ability to respond quickly to occasional needs to act on controversial issues or projects. The Board insures that the U.S. ICDBL does not become the product of just one or two active individuals. Members of the board need not be active in instigating new projects or contributing materials for the newsletter; although a Board member would ideally be actively concerned with the work of the ICDBL.

BRETON IN COURT

Two Bretons, Gilbert Cabon and Jean-Yves Meudec, were arrested and jailed in June 1989 for unlawful possession of explosives. This arrest followed a series of bombings by the ARB (Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne). Mr. Meudec was released from jail October 23rd, but Mr. Cabon still remains there--because he insists on using Breton and no interpreter has been provided for him. 250 Breton Deputies, Senators and local officials from various parties have acted to get an interpreter appointed. The articles which follow briefly describe this problem. Anyone interested in copies of press clippings concerning this case and earlier activities of the ARB is welcome to contact me. Please send a stamped envelope (45¢). **Lois Kuter**

From: **Le Meilleur** 4 nov. 1989

MEUDEC LIBERE... ET CABON ?

Jean-Yves Meudec a été remis en liberté. Le jeune Breton arrêté en juin dernier dans le Finistère, alors qu'il venait de déterrer une poubelle contenant une substance explosive, a pu retrouver sa famille après environ six mois passés derrière les barreaux.

En revanche, Gilbert Cabon, arrêté en même temps que lui, n'a pas recouvré la liberté. Et il semble bien que ce soit son obstination à ne pas vouloir parler une autre langue que le Breton, qui lui vaille d'être aujourd'hui encore enfermé.

Cette volonté, Cabon l'a déjà payée. Pendant sa garde à vue, il a reçu un coup sur la tête. «Après une crise de nerfs» disent les policiers. Mais le médecin qui avait été appelé sur les lieux n'avait prescrit aucun calmant.

Transféré à Paris, Cabon a

été l'objet de mesures disciplinaires humiliantes. On aurait même fait pression sur la famille de son camarade de détention pour qu'il accepte enfin de parler français.

Mais le juge Villemin, chargé du dossier - les deux hommes ont été inculpés d'infraction à la législation sur les explosifs en liaison avec une entreprise terroriste, à savoir les attentats de l'ARB (ce qui reste à démontrer) - bute là sur un «cas» et Cabon semble prêt à aller jusqu'au bout de son combat.

Faut-il rappeler que la Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques prévoit la possibilité du recours à un interprète et que, surtout, «toute personne accusée d'une infraction pénale est présumée innocente jusqu'à ce que sa culpabilité soit établie» ?

From: **La Liberté du Morbihan**
4 nov. 1989

250 élus demandent un interprète pour le détenu Gilbert Cabon

BREST (AFP). - Deux cent cinquante députés, sénateurs et élus locaux de toutes tendances politiques demandent dans une lettre au Garde des Sceaux la nomination d'un interprète pour un militant nationaliste breton détenu à Paris à la suite d'une série d'attentats de l'Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne (ARB). a annoncé, vendredi, son avocat.

Gilbert Cabon, un technicien de l'Arsenal militaire de Brest, arrêté et inculpé pour association de malfaiteurs et infraction à la législation sur les explosifs en juin 1989, «ne s'adresse qu'en breton au juge d'instruction» a indiqué, vendredi, son

avocat Me Yann Choucq du barreau de Nantes. Selon ses amis, c'est le refus du prévenu de s'exprimer en français devant le magistrat qui lui vaudrait un refus de mise en liberté alors qu'un de ses co-accusés a été libéré le 23 octobre dernier.

Il n'existe actuellement pas d'interprète de breton assermenté mais, selon le comité de soutien aux prisonniers politiques bretons, près d'une centaine de personnes se sont proposées auprès de la cour d'appel de Rennes pour exercer cette fonction.

In July and August members of a prisoner support committee handed out flyers about the Meudec-Cabon cases at the Fêtes de Cornouaille and the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient. In Lorient, 20 were arrested--with enough violence to take two to the hospital for treatment. A formal "written question" has been presented to the Ministries of Justice and the Interior to look into the issue of freedom of expression and police brutality.

POLITIQUE

Le Télégramme
24 oct. 1989

Manifestation « bretonne » du Festival : question écrite à l'Assemblée

Dans une question écrite, M. Georges Hage, vice-président communiste de l'Assemblée nationale a rappelé au ministre de l'Intérieur que des militants bretons avaient été interpellés le 6 août dernier lors du Festival interceltique « dans des conditions mettant en cause les libertés d'expression et de manifestation ».

L'inspection générale de la Po-

lice nationale a on le sait, ouvert une enquête à la demande du procureur de la République.

« Des militants bretons ayant porté plainte pour violence, dit M. Hage, il est important que l'enquête aboutisse afin que la vérité soit établie ».

Il lui demande enfin les mesures qu'il entend prendre en ce sens.

ANOTHER COURT BATTLE

Stourm ar Brezhoneg has submitted a complaint to the Committee on Human Rights in Geneva to point out linguistic discrimination in the trial of Pierre Le Cam. This case is different from most others which have received press coverage in that it is not a militant who is in court, using Breton instead of French because he or she has the right to do so. In this case, Mr. Le Cam was accused of murdering Alain Le Bihan, May 8, 1988, in Belle-Isle-en-Terre. Mr. Le Cam is a 63 year old farm worker who left school when he was 13. He cannot read French and has difficulty understanding it. No interpreter was provided for him to help him through the trial. The organizations Skol and Emsav and Stourm ar Brezhoneg have both taken action to point out the injustice of Mr. Le Cam's trial in a country where Breton language interpreters are available if the court chooses to call upon them.

La Liberté du Morbihan 4 nov. 1989

Radioscopie d'une incompréhension

L'organisation Stourm-ar-Brezhoneg a déposé une plainte au Comité des Droits de l'Homme à Genève pour l'affaire Pierre Le Cam, condamné par la cour d'assises des Côtes-du-nord

VANNES. - L'organisation Stourm-ar-Brezhoneg a déposé une plainte au Comité des Droits de l'Homme à Genève dans l'affaire Pierre Le Cam. Motifs de cette plainte : violations du pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques : article 14 alinéa 3 sur les garanties à la personne accusée, article 14 sur la prohibition de la discrimination linguistique, article 27 sur le droit à la communication dans sa propre langue.

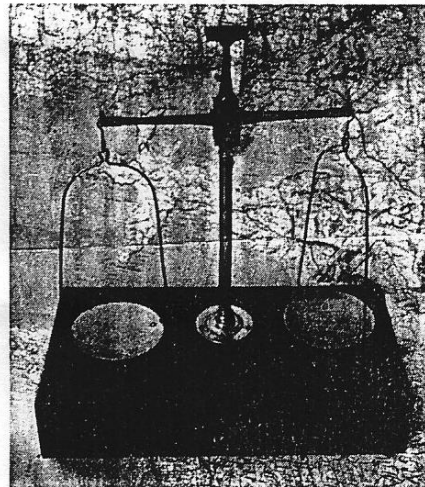
Les faits : Le 4 octobre 1989, la cour d'assises des Côtes-du-Nord a condamné Pierre Le Cam à 5 ans de prison pour le meurtre d'Alain Le Bihan commis le 8 mai 1988 à Belle-Isle-en-Terre.

L'accusé : Pierre Le Cam, ouvrier agricole âgé de 63 ans, a quitté l'école à 13 ans. Il ne sait pas lire et a du mal à comprendre le français.

L'instruction : Pierre Le Cam a été interrogé en français par les gendarmes, le juge d'instruction et le tribunal. Aucun interprète n'a été commis par le tribunal contrairement aux dispositions de l'article 407 du code de procédure pénale et

aux engagements internationaux de la France (Pacte international des droits civils et politiques, convention européenne des droits de l'homme, acte final de la conférence d'Helsinki, déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme). Le psychiatre et le psychologue ont qualifié Pierre Le Cam comme un être « frustré » et « buté » que ses « insuffisances culturelles et scolaires » ont conduit près de la « débilite ».

Questions : L'association Skol an Emzav s'insurge contre les interrogatoires menés en français et des interprétations tendancieuses s'agissant d'une personne ne pratiquant que le breton : « Ce procès démontre que la justice préfère bafouer les droits linguistiques des Bretons dont la langue bannie des tribunaux, est maintenue hors la loi par l'Etat français ». Et Stourm ar Brezhoneg d'interroger : « Pierre Le Cam a-t-il eu un procès équitable quand comme déjà à l'occasion d'autres procès, les accusés bretonnants ne peuvent faire respecter les droits de la défense ? S'agit-il d'une nou-



velle affaire François Laurent ? ». L'organisation SAB fait référence à ce soldat breton fusillé par les Français pendant

la première guerre mondiale parce que, ne parlant que le breton, on l'avait pris pour un espion allemand !

Conclusion du journal « Le Meilleur » sur cette affaire : « En Corse, on pose des bombes pour moins que ça ».

BRETON CHECKS

Most of us have at one time or another received a computer-generated form letter notifying us that a payment is due to keep a magazine subscription alive. Sometimes a second or third notice also arrives even if we are prompt in sending payment... computers can generate pages of form letters before a mere human being has the chance to process our check and update the computer records. But English speakers in the U.S. have never had to contend with the problems a member of the ICDBL in France, Marcel Texier, faced in trying to renew a subscription to Newsweek magazine using a check written in Breton. The following is the letter he received in response to his efforts to pay for the subscription.

NEWSWEEK HOUSE WELLINGTON STREET SLOUGH ENGLAND SL1 1UG TEL SLOUGH (STD 0753) 24552 FAX (0753) 71617 TELEX 848424

27th February 1989

Mr M Texier
8 Rue Du Pas De Calais
78310 Maurepas
FRANCE

Dear Mr Texier

Many thanks for you recent payment.

Unfortunately, I have to return it to you as it was sent back to us by the bank with the message - ~~AMOUNT NOT WRITTEN IN WORDS~~

I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could issue us with a replacement as soon as possible.

When making your second payment, could you please enclose a copy of this letter. Thank you.

I look forward to receiving your replacement payment soon.

Yours sincerely

Angie Harcup

MISS ANGIE HARCUP
Fulfillment Services Department

NMB//AH/JF

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Crédit Mutuel de Bretagne

Kef Kengredit

B.P. 195

Paot evit ar chekenn-mañ NA C'HELLER

KEINVERKAN NEMET, am gourd un ti-ban de dardheval

Paerj, peotje co c'hoazh NON ENDOSSABLE SAUF en d'ar d'un abassement banc'ar na est'ar

Da

Da-azaf d'ar

CCM CARENTOIR

(99) 088366

Da vater kompozet o

VANNES

MONSIEUR TEXIER MARCEL

8 RUE DU PAS DE CALAIS

78310 MAUREPAS

7724 060 0554 0621677 1 40

2724060005601558900800954621679000

A/C PAYEE ONLY

Breton checks - continued

Naturally, Mr. Texier responded by pointing out that his original payment was perfectly valid--referring in his letter of March 11th which was written in impeccable English to décret-loi 30 octobre 1935. Sadly, it sometimes takes the threat of a law suit to help people notice that "money talks" in languages other than French or English. Those at the Newsweek International office learned perhaps for the first time of the existence of the Breton language and its words for 195 francs. The following is the letter of apology written to Mr. Texier for Newsweek's overly hasty assumption that his check was "not written in words".

Newsweek International

NEWSWEEK HOUSE WELLINGTON STREET SLOUGH ENGLAND SL1 1UG TEL SLOUGH (STD 0753) 24552 FAX (0753) 71617 TELEX 848424

3rd April 1989

Mr M Texier
3 Rue Du Pas De Calais
78310 Maurepas
FRANCE

Dear Mr Texier

Thank you for your letter of 11th March 1989, enclosing a copy of Miss Harcup's letter of 27th February 1989 and your cheque. As I now deal with subscriptions in France, she has kindly asked me to reply to you.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere apologies for the trouble which we have caused you regarding this whole matter. However, can I take a moment to explain why your cheque was returned to you.

When we received your cheque we didn't realize that it was written in the Breton language - as this is the first case we have come across. It was not until we received your letter that we realized our mistake.

I've now arranged for your cheque to be presented to the bank, so I trust this matter has now been solved. Under the circumstances the least I can do is to extend your subscription term by six weeks.

Mr Texier, I hope that after reading this, you will find it in your heart to forgive us for the trouble we've caused.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Wallis

MISS MICHELLE WALLIS
Fulfilment Services Department

MW/JF/0184

Ar Sorserezh e Breizh

Reun ar C'halan

Gwerzioù dastumet e-kerz an XIXvet kantved gant Kervarker ha Fañch an Uhel a laka anat peger kreñv e oa gwechall kredenn ar Vreizhiz e galloud ar sorserezh. Fouge a-ra ur sorserez yaouank e oar gwallañ an ed, mont da giez du pe da vran, lakaat an neñvoù da frailhañ, ar mor bras da dridal, hag an douar da grenañ. Gouest eo ivez da "skoulmañ an alc'houiltenn e-kreiz hag en daou benn," ar pezh a dalvez kement ha lakaat ur gwaz da vezañ ken dic'halloud gant ur vaouez hag un den spazhet. E gwerzioù 'zo e vez graet meneg eus ar bugel koar. Un delwennig e oa anezhañ. Douget e veze e-pad nav miz gant ur plac'h yaouank dindan he hiviz ha badezet e-kreiz an noz gant ur beleg disakr. Pa veze sanket spilhoù er bugel koar e veze taget al lazhiad gant poanioù skrijus hag a-benn emberr e oa war e dalaroù.

Kredennoù seurt-se o deus padet betek an amzer-vremañ. Pa oan paotr bihan war ar maez, e tigouezhe a-wechoù d'ur vuoc'h mont da hesk. Lavaret e veze e oa aet he laezh gant al laer-amann, ha ret e veze distrobinellañ ar paour kaezh loen. Met peurvuiañ e lakae an dud o fiziañs e galloud rimadelloù 'zo evit pareañ diouzh kleñvedoù a bep seurt. Evit kas kuit an denedeo e veze red kaout un den, gwaz pe vaouez, ganet e miz eost. Graet e veze teir c'hwezhadenn war an denedeo en ur lavarout:

Denedeo, denedec'h
N'eo ket aze emañ da lec'h
Nag aze nag a nep lec'h.
Kea, treuz nav mor ha nav menez
Ha nav feuteun a drugarez;
Ke da ober da diegezh.

Ar werbl a veze kaset kuit gant ar reolenn-mañ a veze dibunet en ur frotañ daou vaen-higolenn an eil ouzh egile:

Ar werbl, cheñch a blas!
N'eo ket aze emañ da blas,
Nag aze na neblec'h!
Eus nav deu da eizh,
Eus eizh da seizh,
Eus seizh da c'hwec'h,
Eus c'hwec'h da bemp,
Eus pemp da bevar,
Eus pevar da dri,
Eus tri da zaou,
Eus daou da unan,
Eus unan da netra,
Ave Maria!

Evit an darvoedenn e veze implijet ur rimadell all:

Trede-devezh, devezh dec'h,
N'eo ket aze emañ da lec'h
Nag aze na neblec'h,
Nag aze nag ur plas all
Un drede-devezh 'zo ur pezh fall
Kerzh d'ar mor da veuziñ
Pe d'an tan da zeviñ! Amen!

Evit paraeñ ar pennsac'h e ranke un den dibunañ ar rimadell-mañ teir gwech hep tennañ e alan:

Pennsac'h, pennsac'h
Bout da benn er sac'h;
Pa zeuio er-maez e vo yac'h!

Summary

Witchcraft in Brittany. In a Breton ballad, a young witch boasts of her powers: with her art, she can ruin crops, make men impotent, and start earthquakes. Such beliefs lasted well into the 20th century; in the rural community where I lived as a child, when a cow stopped producing milk, it was because of an evil spell. Mostly, however, the practice of magic was reduced to the use of formulas for the cure of such ailments as inflammations, sores, buboes, and mumps.

Sources

Kervarker, **Barzhaz Breizh** (Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh, 1988), pp. 125-128.
Fañch an Uhel, **Gwerzioù kozh Breizh** (Brest: Al Liamm, 1970), pp. 26-29.
"Ar bugel koar", recorded by Andrea ar Gouilh in **Gwerzioù ha sonioù ar bobl**.
A. E. Troude, **Nouveau dictionnaire pratique Breton-Français** (Mayenne: J. Floc'h, 1979), pp. 809-810
Jules Gros, **Le Trésor du breton parlé. Troisième partie: Le style populaire** (Lannion: Barr-Heol, 1974), pp. 337-338.

RECENT BRETON PUBLICATIONS

Notes by Reun ar C'halan

Goulc'han Kervella. **Lara** (Brest: Al Liamm, 1989). 224 pages. 75 Francs.

A collection of thirteen short stories by the head of the theatre group **Strollad ar Vro Bagan**. Before devoting all of his time to writing, staging, and directing plays, Goulc'han Kervella was a psychiatrist, and several of these compelling stories have to do with mental illness.

Fañch an Uhel. **Kontadennoù ar bobl 4** (Brest: Al Liamm, 1989). 112 pages, 72 Francs.

This volume brings to completion the publication of the original Breton text of the folk tales collected by Fañch an Uhel in the second half of the 19th century.

Ronan ar Gléau. **Dictionnaire classique français-breton** (Brest: Al Liamm, 1989). 384 pages, 115 Francs.

The sixth volume of this much needed work includes the words with initial letters going from IMP to MAC.

A Gift of Poetry

The following poem (in three languages) has been sent to **Bro Nevez** by Jan Deloof, author of **Verhulen van het eind van de wereld** and **Bretanje is weer poëzie**, Flemish translations of Breton short stories and poetry (reviewed in **Bro Nevez** 28). In this case, one of Mr. Deloof's own poems in Flemish has been translated into Breton by Beatris Jouin. The English translation is his.

The poet describes the inspiration for his poem as follows:

Paul Delvaux ... is a Walloon painter living in Flanders and belonging to the Brussels school of surrealists. Consequently, every inch a Belgian! His paintings are very often populated with naked women and ceremonially dressed old gentlemen who, however, do not communicate or are even unable to notice each other. One of his paintings is somewhat ironically called 'Noel' (Christmas) and is very typical: the only thing you see is a deserted winter street; no crib or cradle, no shepherds, no Magi coming from the East, no movement whatsoever--only some vestiges of human life, but no human beings around. Still, the general atmosphere is not menacing; there is no unrest or fright, the whole scene is rather peaceful. I hope that the poem is transmitting that same sort of strange feeling.

Kerstmis bij Delvaux

de lantarenpalen
tekenen
de steenweg recht

de bomen
zijn er echt
maar
voor het perspectief

achter de verlichte ramen
wacht misschien
gepast seizoengerief

een plastic kerstboom?
zeker is het niet

de telefoondraden
gonzen
van ergens
het blijde nieuws
me ijzeren trouw
naar nergens

naar niemand

niet eens
een blote vrouw

Jan Deloof

Nedeleg, hervez Paul Delvaux

Gant ar peulioù tredan
eo lakaet ar straed pavezet
ez eeun

Ar gwez
n'eus anezho
traken ha nemetken
evit ober brav

A-dreñv ar prenistri goulaouet
ema marteze
binvioù ar mare
o c'hortoz

Ur wezenn Nedeleg plastik?
Ne barifen ket

Eus ul lec'h bennak
e kas, diwar o fraoñv,
an orjalennoù pellgomz
gant fealder dir
ar c'heleier eürus
da lec'h ebet

da zen ebet

N'eus ket zoken
ur vaouez en noazh

(Brezhoneg: Beatris Jouin)

Christmas according to Paul Delvaux

The lampposts
pull the paved road
straight

the trees
simply and solely
exist
for the perspective

behind the lighted windows
maybe
the season's tools
are waiting

a plastic Christmas tree?
I'd not bet on it

from somewhere
the telephone wires
buzz
with iron loyalty
the blissful tidings
to nowhere

to nobody

not even
a naked woman

Jan Deloof

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN STIVELL

Since its initiation in the U.S. in 1980, Margot de Chatelaine and Kevin Gilligan of the Society for Inter-Celtic Arts and Culture in Waltham, Massachusetts, have been active members of the ICDBL. They have kindly allowed **Bro Nevez** the right to reproduce part of a fascinating interview originally destined for the magazine **Keltica** (see article which follows).

Conducted in Cambridge, Massachusetts, January 21, 1982, the following interview remains very timely and offers insight into Breton music today and one of its most important ambassadors to the world, Alan Stivell.

- Q - The French tourist board presents Brittany as a quaint backwater with colorful peasants living in the past. They don't portray the Bretons as having a future, not as Celts anyway.
- A - This is one reason why I began using electric instruments in my music. It was a necessary psychological shock to jolt people out of seeing Brittany and the Celts purely in terms of the past. This wasn't an easy thing to do because it went against many peoples' ideas about Breton music and folk music in general. But it was important to show that we could play modern music and be part of the modern world, and still be Celts. When I first used electric guitars and synthesizers people didn't exactly know what to make of my music. For example, the French radio announcers who had played my music and other Breton music before had always been very patronizing. To themselves I suppose they were saying: "I don't understand this Breton music, but it's not bad." But on the air they were always making jokes about Brittany, as if to apologize for the music they were about to play. They felt obliged to laugh, to say something funny like "We dedicate this song to everyone who likes pancakes," or "Here's something to remember your holidays by," or "Calling all Bretons: put on your coiffes and wooden shoes." So it was very funny to me to hear them saying, as they were about to play my first Celtic rock single "Pop Plinn," "Okay, folks, bring out your binious and bombardes." It must have been a real shock when they heard my electric guitars and synthesizers instead.
- Q - Just as if you'd literally electrocuted them. Maybe they thought you didn't have electricity in Brittany yet, or didn't know what to do with it. You brought power to the people.
- A - Yes, I've always considered this to be one of my modest victories. Just as Lenin said that the Soviet Union was socialism plus electricity, I like to say that Stivell was Celticism plus electricity. Also, I had always included some Irish and Scottish material on my records, which proved to these announcers that there was in fact something called "Celtic music," when, beforehand, they had thought of the Celts only as an ancient race of barbarians who had long since disappeared. French musicologists had also claimed that Irish and Breton and other Celtic music was unrelated. So, I had to laugh when the radio announcers would say, "And now for some Celtic music from Brittany," and then play "The King of the Fairies" or some other Irish song I had recorded. I was actually quite pleased when people, even Bretons, confused Irish with Breton music, or vice versa. It was even more gratifying to have my original work introduced on radio or television as traditional Irish or Breton folk music.
- Q - Your Breton electrification project brings to mind a famous incident in American music, when Bob Dylan first used an electric guitar to play folk music at the Newport Festival in 1963. This scandalized a lot of folk purists, but within months almost everyone was using electric instruments and all kinds of musical fusions were taking place: folk-rock, jazz-rock, classical-rock. Once the flood-gates were opened everything became possible.

A - Après Dylan le déluge. Purism, I believe, is a symptom of a culture's sickness and a sign that its death is at hand. It's the reaction of certain people to hold on desperately to what they think they can save from a dying culture. The most superficial aspects and signs of their cultural identity are insisted on. So, in regard to Breton music, they will say: "If it's not played with a bombarde or biniou, our native bagpipe, then it's not Breton music." If they really thought about it, they'd admit that the bagpipe has never been particularly Breton. There was Breton music before the bagpipe and there will be Breton music after the bagpipe. It's obvious. But it's true that a culture in its death agony clings to superficial things, and it's this reflex-reaction that we must fight since it hastens the decline of the very culture it claims to be saving.

Q - Had you heard other Celtic music played on electric instruments before you began using them with Breton music?

A - Fairport Convention was playing some Celtic music with electric instruments and drums the time I released "Pop-Plinn." But the first Celtic rock song I can remember hearing was "Jig-a-jig" ... about 1967. Donovan actually wrote a song called "Celtic Rock," but there was nothing really Celtic-sounding about it. Myself, I wanted to do Celtic rock the first time I heard an electric guitar in the 1950s. But it couldn't be done because at that time it was impossible to find an electric guitarist who would agree to play a Breton tune. They thought it would be something like prostitution. "I'm a good guitarist," they'd say, "I can't lower myself to play Breton music."

Q - People need to be assured that both popular and traditional styles can go on simultaneously, as well as any combination of the two; that one is not going to kill the other. It's important to have this diversity in Celtic music, with modern songs attractive to younger people and others that continue the traditions of the past and show where the music has come from--a continuity that can appeal to older people and get them to listen to the new work.

A - This is true but it's easily misunderstood. My father (Jord Cochevelou), when he was more than eighty years old, attended some of my concerts and would congratulate the drummer and guitarist afterward. And I'm sure there are many other older people who are not against electricity. Certain critics said that I used electric instruments as a kind of strategy to appeal to young people. There is some truth in that, but it should not be forgotten that I myself love rock music and belong to the younger generation. In interviews I often find myself explaining why I use rock instruments, as if I were someone who grew up entirely with Breton traditional music, when, in fact, I am from the rock generation, the rock revolution, myself. So the kind of music I play is the most natural and authentic I know.

In Brittany, as everywhere, tastes change constantly. At any given moment you may have more older people appreciating my electric music than younger people. The younger Bretons who are influenced by the French way of thinking and lack of emotional spontaneity try to analyze everything intellectually, even music. They will not simply listen to a song and say I like that sound, or I don't like it. Instead, they will say: "Why is he playing this song that way? What is he trying to prove? Why is he using electric guitar and drums? Does he want to make more money or something?" It's very ironic. The great majority of younger people came to Breton folk music through my Celtic rock because they were already in love with rock music. But before long they become more purist than anyone in Brittany, and they think that I'm a bastard for using electric guitar. One year before they wanted Mick Jagger's autograph and one year later they're condemning me for playing rock music. They only want bombardes and bagpipes and acoustic guitars in Brittany.

Q - When did you begin to play the harp?

A - In 1953, when I was nine years old. I began to perform publicly in 1966, which was when I took the name Stivell. I wanted to separate my life on stage from my private life. My family name, Cochevelou, means "old spring" while Stivell means "spring," and for me, a new spring, a new instrument, for Breton music.

Q - What direction do you wish to take in your music from here on?

A - In general I will be more of a futurist. The music I will make will be a kind of 21st century music. We have to be aware of the past and to know as much about it as we can. Up till now, I have been conjugating Breton music from the past into the present tense, but now I must conjugate it from the present into the future. I have many experiments left to do, many more directions to try. Each time I do a record someone will say: "That's it. Now it's impossible to do something else. You have nowhere to go but back." When, in fact, each place you arrive at leaves you with an infinity of choices, of possibilities to explore.

Q - This will no doubt involve new styles of music, different instruments, different musicians. How will you do this and still retain the Breton and Celtic elements?

A - Until recently I had to be more conscious of my Breton roots and more analytical about what I was playing and why, which was more of an experiment in itself, since I am not analytical by nature. Now I believe I can express myself musically without having to reflect and analyze so much because I know that my Celtic nature will always be the central influence shaping everything I do.

Q - So you will simply be drawing from the well, unconsciously, instinctively, from what's inside "Stivell"?

A - Yes. I think that nowadays we must express ourselves as if we were living in a free Brittany and had no need to assert our identities so aggressively. Even in art sometimes we must not be militants. We must only be people expressing something. It is this self-expression that is militancy itself.

Q - What is the prevailing musical fashion in Brittany now? (1982) What groups and artists are most people listening to?

A - Not me, I know. I think probably the Police and other new wave groups. Many people still attend Celtic concerts and festivals, but interest in Breton folk music is not as strong as it was in the 70s. However, I would not be surprised to see another wave in the Breton revival develop soon, particularly with local radio stations becoming more numerous and powerful. Italy offers an interesting parallel. I have a lot of fans in Italy because the local stations play a lot of Celtic music. The national network stations play only the most popular kinds of music and this least-common-denominator approach leaves out folk music entirely. Local stations tend to reflect the wide variety of listeners' interests and will play a little bit of everything. So, on any given day, you will hear some Celtic music played on local stations in Italy. I never had so many people at a performance as I did in Milan in 1980--15,000 people at an open-air concert. And in Rome it was 11,000 people, which I consider a big victory for the Celts. I was very pleased to be able to sing in Breton and other Celtic languages in front of so many young Romans who were ashamed of not being Celts themselves. Naturally, I would have preferred to play in the Colisseum, where so many Celts and other ancient "barbarians" were slaughtered. I'd be happy to play in any old Roman ruin, singing Celtic songs, dancing Celtic dances.

A - All the traffic around the Colisseum has loosened the foundations so they've closed it. If you played there, the whole thing would probably come crashing down--an Orpheus in reverse.

- A - There has been a remarkable revival of Celtic feeling in Spain as well, and not just in Galicia and Asturias. A taxi driver in Madrid once told me: "I'm a Celt too. I'm from Cantabriga." So all of northern Spain seems to consider itself Celtic. Actually, more people attended my concerts in southern Spain than in the northwest. The reason may be that there are simply more people in the south, but the biggest crowd I had in Spain was in Zaragossa, which has no Celtic background.
- Q - Galicia has a number of Celtic organizations now and wishes to be considered part of the European Celtic community, despite the fact that it lost its Celtic language soon after the Roman conquest.
- A - They say that Celtic disappeared in Galicia more than a thousand years ago, but the Galician language, Gallego, includes a lot of Celtic root words. One of my favorite harpers, Emilio Cao, a Galician, told me that an archaic language, part Iberian and part Celtic, was spoken in some parts of Galicia until recently. Unfortunately, it was never written down and no one seems to have studied it.
- Q - We too have read of a special language or dialect, a combination of Basque and Celtic, that was spoken by masons and people who worked on the roads in Galicia as a kind of trade jargon. This too had never been written down and the people who spoke it had no idea where it came from. Few Americans have any idea where Galicia is, let alone know anything about its Celtic heritage. This is also true of Brittany, which most people, if they know of it at all, consider part of France.
- A - Yes, I've often experienced that myself. In Canada, a music critic once said: "This Stivell is a fraud. How can a Frenchman play Celtic music." And when your public radio station interviewed me in Boston I was introduced as Alan Stivell "from Western France." It's rather strange to begin an interview with me by saying: "How did you become interested in Celtic music, being French?" You expect someone who is interested in Irish or Scottish music to know that Brittany is a Celtic country. But even in Celtic Europe, this is not always recognized. Someone at the Scottish School of Piping in Edinburgh was very surprised to learn that Brittany is Celtic and he asked me if it was near the Côte d'Azur. This is especially strange when you look at a map of Britain and realize that the lands closest to the southern coast are Brittany and Normandy. But then, the British people's sense of geography in general is rather cloudy.
- Q - How aware are people in Brittany of their inter-Celtic relationships?
- A - Bretons are far more conscious of the other Celtic nations, primarily because Brittany is alone on the continent. The other Celts, being all together in the British Isles, have always emphasized their differences more than their similarities. The Bretons, by contrast, because they are isolated, have placed more importance on what they have in common with other Celts. This is very natural. When the Celts lived all over Europe in ancient times I'm sure they were just as aware of the customs and characteristics that distinguished them from each other as separate tribes. Only when a culture is very sick can these differences be subordinated to the common goal of survival. The Arabs, for example, are so numerous that their culture is in no danger of disappearing. Even though they know they have many things in common, they cannot unite politically. If they were to unite it would be as dangerous to the world as the unification of all the Teutonic people or Slavic peoples. Religious and political hostility between the Scots and the Irish and the Welsh has also worked against inter-Celtic relationships. The Irish will sometimes say they are the only true Celts because of their independence, when, in fact, a Breton who speaks Breton is more Celtic than an Irish person who speaks English. There are many more Breton-speakers than Irish-speakers so we could say that Brittany is more Celtic than Ireland.

- Q** - People all over the world are searching for their roots and reasserting their native cultures. Do you think this is a divisive force or one that will ultimately bring people closer together?
- A** - I believe that perhaps the main problem in the world today is that so many people have been uprooted. They have been cut off from their roots and have lost their identities and sense of connection to the world. Celtic culture can reconnect us because its roots go right back to the beginning of western civilization. There has been no break in our evolution from the time of the megaliths. In other cultures the lines have been broken, especially by imperialism. I believe this is why younger Europeans who do not live in the Celtic countries feel something deep inside whenever they hear Celtic music. The Celts represent the only non-imperialist culture to survive in Europe. Every popular culture in the world has been repressed in some way. Political repression leads naturally to psychological repression, forcing these cultures into the unconscious. Thus, whenever a way is found to express one's native culture, it is an act of both political and psychological liberation--freedom of speech, in a public sense, and freedom to express one's emotions and imagination, in a personal sense. Many people feel they have something in common with the Celts because every time one rejects the official, imperial culture of the state one returns to some form of popular culture and personal expression that is close to Celtic culture in spirit. That is why the fight to maintain Celtic culture in the modern world and the fight to end cultural imperialism wherever it exists are one and the same. In the end, I am sure, the resurgence of popular cultures--which we call "the search for roots" in personal terms, and "nationalism" in political parlance--will be a unifying force. The more one rejects imperial culture and state power, the more one feels in harmony with other peoples and with the earth, since wars against people are largely the work of competing states and wars against the environment are not possible in places where people are firmly rooted and cherish their native lands.

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SOLD! — BAGPIPES

Readers may recall a note in the February issue of **Bro Nevez** (no. 29) concerning a set of bagpipes to be sold for the benefit of the U.S. ICDBL. I am happy to report that the bagpipes have been sold--\$240 of the proceeds have gone into our treasury and \$200 has gone to Diwan. My thanks to Jim Kerr for his generous offer of the bagpipes. It is fitting that an instrument which has become a part of Breton culture (used in pair with the bombarde or in the bagad, or bagpipe band) should serve to go towards the support of the Breton language and culture.

Please note that all members of the U.S. ICDBL are welcome to contact the Treasurer for a report of our income and expenditures. I have recently prepared a report for our Board of Directors and will be updating it at the end of the year. **Lois Kuter**

KELTICA-The Inter-Celtic Journal

Sadly, this 100-page magazine produced by the Society of Inter-Celtic Arts and Culture issued only two numbers. But these issues are still available (for \$5 each) and worth ordering. Each issue is loaded with information--beautifully printed and illustrated with drawings and photographs.

The best way to introduce this unique publication is to show a sample of the contents:

Keltica No. 1 - Winter 1979-80

North America: Welsh Society of Philadelphia, The Bretons in Canada, Cape Breton's Magazine, Canadian Celtic Congress; **International:** International Association for the Defense of Menaced Languages and Cultures, Celtic League, Sean MacBride; **Breizh:** International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, Roparz Hemon I.M., Celtic Wrestling, Breton Periodicals and Organizations; **Kernow:** The Kerenewek Revival, Gorseth Kernow, Bibliography for Cornish Studies; **Eire:** Cumann Merriman, Eriugena, Pageant of Pearse, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann; **Mannin:** Tynwald, Yn Chruinnacht, Traditional Manx Folk Music; **Alba:** An Comunn Gaidhealach, Hugh MacDiarmid, Galloway; **Cymru:** Cymdeithas yr Iath Gymraeg and the Status of Welsh, Education in Wales--the Worst in Europe?, Planet; **Celtica:** Odyssey of the Irish (early history), The Epigraphic Society; and ... book reviews, records and music notes, book stores, museums, record companies. **Interview:** The Clancy Brothers.

Keltica No. 2 - 1983

North America: The American Committee for Irish Studies, Colleges and Universities offering Celtic Courses, Cymdeithas Madog, Mod Ontario, Down North--The Book of Cape Breton's Magazine, The Manx in North America, International Breton Language Committee--U.S. Branch (that's us!); **International:** The EEC, Energy and Celtic Europe, The Maori Language Movement, Poetry by George Tait; First Assembly of the Fourth World; **Breizh:** The Breton Struggle for National Survival (by Reun ar C'halan--one of the best introductions to Breton history and nationalism I have yet to find), Poetry by Anjela Duval; **Kernow:** Economics: the 80s and Beyond, Cornish Folk Song and Dance, Lyfrow Lodenek, Poetry by Jack Clemo; **Eire:** The British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign, Padraic Pearse: Schoolmaster to a Nation, Mairtin O Direáin (poetry); **Mannin:** Shearwater Press, Manx Crosses, Manx Gaelic Recordings, Manx Music Today; **Alba:** The Scotland UN Committee, The Government of Scotland in Light of the Scotland Act, Church and State in Scotland Before the Union, Leabhraichean Gaidhlig; **Cymru:** Yr Academi Gymreig--The English Language Section, Antur Aelhaearn, Canolfan Iaith Nant Gwrtheyrn, Dylan Thomas: Welsh Poetry?, The Pwys Review, Three Poems by Tony Curtis; **Celtica:** A New Celtic Hillfort in the Land of the Mound Builders, An Ancient Celtic Calendar from Canada, A Dated Runic Puzzle on Holy Island Scotland; **Arts:** An Claidheamh Soluis/The Irish Arts Center, 1981 Celtic Calendar, Reflections on the Wickerman ... and notes on records, musicians' tours, music organizations (na Píobairí uilleann), Country Dancing and Celtic Knotwork, Facets Performance Ensemble; **Interview:** Dafydd Iwan.

For information about current work of the Society of Inter-Celtic Arts and Culture, or to purchase the above issues of **Keltica**, contact:

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DANCING IN BRITTANY

Joseph O'Callahan

The Bretons have long been known as dancers. Boucher de Perthes commented in 1831: "No other people take the love of dance so far; one sees them in towns, even in the public square, on the stone, dancing whole hours exposed to the rain..." (1) Bouët, in 1808, observed: "The dance is an activity that the Breton peasant loves with a passion, with fury. Neither the length of the road, nor the greatest heat of summer are in his eyes an obstacle ... he'll travel three, four, or more leagues to come to the place where the bagpipe calls. ..." (2) Indeed, in Brittany there is a saying that dance is "that which makes a man whole." (3)

While the dancing was passionate, it had its own times and its own ceremonies. From a 1977 interview with the Morvan brothers, singers in Bro-Plin:

A - Otherwise, whenever there would be a few people gathered together, there would be singing and dancing.

Q - Anytime?

A - Mostly in winter, generally, yes.

Q - During the summer they wouldn't dance?

A - No, no, well, a little during the threshing, but not much ... they wouldn't dance before the harvest. (4)

Dancing was associated with the harvest period:

... in parts of Upper Cornouaille, the young people waited impatiently for the potato harvest... It lasted for the whole month of September, sometimes longer. The men and women of neighboring hamlets formed a large work-party, harvesting for each of its members in turn. Two or three times a week they gathered in a long celebration which sometimes continued till dawn. As always, dance had the prominent place. ... (5)

As in most traditional societies, winter, the dark, passive side of the year, was when neighbors gathered together in fire-lit rooms to recite tales and lore, sing and dance, to tell over again what it means to be human. In Brittany these gatherings ended in dance.

The neighborhood opened out into a larger community for other dance occasions. Amongst these was the wedding--perhaps the central ceremony of Breton traditional culture. This was an elaborately formal progression of ceremonies extending through at least two days with accompanying dances. Comparable crowds would gather at summer "Pardons", religious gatherings, including a dance at night, that were held at the many small chapels which served as a focus of neighborhood identity. Also, new threshing grounds were stamped down by hundred of dancing feet--one of the last occasions on which dancing was permitted in 'puritan' areas of Leon.

Some pardons drew crowds from large areas, but dancing was an essentially local activity. It is no wonder that local styles and local dance types exist in great number. There were no "Breton" dances as such, known throughout the country. Indeed, it might be said that for the Breton, those with whom he could dance made up his "people", and that the activity itself was an expression of this community. Within this framework an individual dancer improvised in his personal style, embroidering his own steps into the common round.

Amongst the major dance types the **gavotenn** takes pride of place. It characterized all of Cornouaille, the north of Morbihan, and parts of western Leon. Regional forms include that of Bro-Aven--the prosperous country around Quimperlé and Rosporden well known in the late 19th and early 20th century when this area provided most outsiders' views of Brittany through tourism and paintings. The Bigouden area west of Quimper is characterized by dance in couples, in contrast to other areas with their circles and chains. A tendency to break the long chain into shorter segments was characteristic of the Cap-Sizun and Quimper regions. Nineteenth century accounts suggest that the dance was slowing down there, becoming more polite as it approached our time, and, indeed, it is by now extinct.

The **gavotenn** remained vigorous and earthy in north Cornouaille, particularly around Carhaix, Huelgoat, Callac, and Rostrenan. While the people of Bolezac, in the far north of the mountains described the dance of Poullaouen, further south, as "laid-back", dancers from Spezet, nearing south Cornouaille, commented that the Poullaouen people "jumped around like sheep"!

People in the area around Guemene-sur-Scorff/Bro Pourlet danced the **gavotenn** in their own way. Here a circle of four dancers began things, the men leaping high and clicking their heels. The circle metamorphosed into a long chain, with the lead dancer executing especially fancy steps, à la Bulgaria. What could be expected from a people of whom it was said in 1849:

En tu 'rall d'ar Faoued ha d'eskopti Gwened,
En ur c'harter trouzous, e bro ar Bourloded,
E-lec'h kemer o falz ha medin an edou,
Oll an dud dastumed doc'h son ar biniou,
Ne sonjent 'met koroll, 'met evet chopinad,
'met tremen an amzer en diroll hag ebad.

Over beyond Le Faouet, and the diocese of Vannes,
in a noisy country, in the land of the Pourloded,
instead of taking their sickles and harvesting,
All collect at the sound of the bagpipe,
They care for nothing but dancing, drinking cider,
passing the time in disorder and merriment. (6)

Though the folk of the northeastern Vannetais called their dance **laridenn**, it was in fact a **gavotten**--danced in the precise, darting style whose relationship to **an dro** to the south is evident.

This **an dro** takes us into a different dance province. The rhythmic patterns, steps and ambience contrast clearly with those of the various **gavotten**. Other dances built on a similar pattern, and possibly having developed from the parent **an dro**, had begun to oust it from its central place in the dance "set" here. Such are the **hanter dro** and the **laridenn** proper.

Every dance was performed as part of a set, most often of three dances, the make-up of which varied from place to place. The **gavotenn** or its equivalent came first, followed by a **bal**, in which the dancers broke into couples, returning to the common round for the final dance. The third element in the set had commonly, by 1920, moved from being a reprise of the first to another variation--a quadrille or formation based on couples. The full set lasted some 45 minutes or so.

Where the dance was weakening, and its attendant ceremonial thus increasingly ignored, the set might consist of only the first two elements, or have disappeared altogether. This was often the case in south Leon and Tregor, the last of the three major dance provinces of Breton-speaking Brittany. Men and women faced each other here in opposing lines, each executing their own steps, moving sideways but never touching. Some attribute this formation to modern clerical influence. But, because this dance was in full decay already by 1920, its history will perhaps always remain something of a mystery. All this said, there is an effort begun presently in Tregor to gather the last bits of information with the intention of resurrecting the older style of dance.

In a small area--the plateau between Guingamp and Rostrenan--the **plin** was danced. Though this is related historically to the dance noted above, and to those of French-speaking Brittany to its east, it is quite individual. While one might not take Alan Stivell's idea of megalithic origins too seriously, the **plin**'s compelling rolling rhythm is unique.

Music for the dance was most often provided by the singing of dancers themselves, whether by the chain's leader, or by scattered singers within the ring. While this was almost always so for local dancing, weddings and pardons called for professional instrumentalists--most often the bombarde/biniou duo. The richer areas of south Cornouaille had come to depend especially on professionals; north Cornouaille, on the other hand, had elaborated dance song into a virtuoso art form. All the contemporary proponents of this "kan ha diskant" style hail from this region. Dancers of west Leon and the Vannetais sang in chorus in response to the soloist who led the chain or ring. This style is a survival of the common medieval "Carole" found in very few areas today outside of Brittany.

While many areas that were increasingly being integrated into French society lost the practice of the dance (as well as of the Breton language) after World War I as a function of changes in community structure, the dance remained a central community activity in most of interior Brittany up until World War II. But, the massive changes of the post-war years effectively destroyed the basis of the old Breton rural civilization in these more isolated areas as well. Dancing became confined to family gatherings when those public occasions where it had formerly played a major role became obsolete. **Festou-noz** (evening gatherings) became fewer. Traditional arts were considered generally inappropriate in a society in which the prizes of modernization had suddenly become all-important.

It was not until 1955 that the public dance gathering was relaunched, and gradually evolved a new form appropriate to the changing rural society. The singers or musicians moved onto a stage, behind the microphone, and dancers paid an entrance fee. This revival was a conscious and determined effort on the part of a few young men and women who had experienced the fullness of traditional culture in north Cornouaille and who had also seen its decline. Loeiz Ropars and Albert Trevidic are just two of the most prominent names here.

The revival gathered steam gradually until the explosive awakening of Breton consciousness amongst the youth in the 1970s carried the revived "fest-noz" along with it into the view of all of France. The dance was a public statement of Breton identity--a sacrament one could almost say, a communion to which thousands flocked every weekend. There can have been few more powerful and moving gatherings in modern Europe. In dancing, young people linked arms with their parents and grandparents, with all those who had danced before them in their place. The immemorial ring that seemed to have finally broken was once again reformed.

Traditional music was an integral part of this scene, and most of the contemporary developments in Breton music have occurred in the context of the dance. Unlike the situation in Ireland where traditional music had until very recently lost its social context, Breton music has remained the possession of the people. In the 60s and 70s old women in traditional costume sang on the same stage with electric guitarists, and all were aware of forming part of one community. Traditional arts were thus renewed and taken in new directions. A nation, it appeared, was remaking itself and providing an example to all Europe.

From the viewpoint of 1989, it would appear that this movement has lost some intensity. Dance, once again, is becoming marginal, old-fashioned activity. There are tremendously exciting groups and enthusiastic dancers, but these are minor elements in what seems to be becoming more and more a French world. Ballroom dance is regaining the ground it had lost to traditional dance in the 1960s and 70s.

While it is possible to address directly the question of the reasons for the decline of the fest-noz in the 1980s, and to experiment with new contexts such as "dance cafés", it would appear that the future of the traditional dance is still inseparable from that of the Breton rural community as a whole. If these communities are able to continue in the future as Breton communities, then dance will retain its place of honor--just as Bouët described in 1808.

Notes

- (1) From **Chant Armoricaains ou souvenirs de Basse-Bretagne** by Jacques Boucher de Perthes (Paris:1831); as translated from citation in **La tradition populaire de danse en Basse-Bretagne**, by Jean-Michel Guilcher (Paris: Mouton, 1963), page 55.
- (2) From Olivier Perrin and Alexandre Bouët, **Breiz Izel** (Quimper, 1918); as translated from citation in Guilcher (see note above), page 55.
- (3) Guilcher quotes an old woman from St. Herbot: "An dañs a zalc'h an den en e sav" (page 56).
- (4) Interview appeared in magazine **Evid ar Brezhoneg** #94, November 1977.
- (5) Jean-Michel Guilcher, **La tradition populaire de danse en Basse-Bretagne** (Paris: Mouton, 1963), page 18.
- (6) From **Levr al Aldourer** by Joakim Gwilhom, 1849, cited in **Yann ar Baluc'henn**, by Job Jaffre (Dastum, 1986).

New Breton Records

Noted by Lois Kuter

Yann-Fañch Kemener. **Gwerzioù ha sonioù**. Adipho YFK 01.

A solo album by a traditional singer who is renowned in Brittany for his talent for unaccompanied dance songs and longer ballads. This record--the third solo album--concentrates on the repertoire of central Brittany, a Breton-speaking area where Yann-Fañch grew up learning songs from family and neighbors before becoming more widely known in the late 1970's when he was in his early 20's. A booklet accompanies the recording with the Breton song texts and translations in both French and English, as well as background on the songs and their musical structure. The recording is available in compact disk, cassette or record.

Méloides chantées en trégor: Bro Dreger II. Kreizenn Sevenadurel Lannuon & Nevez Amzer Tregastel. BD 002. (cassette only)

A collection of songs by young and older singers of Bro Dreger in unaccompanied traditional style or with a less traditional instrumental accompaniment. A booklet introduces songs and gives the Breton texts with French translations. (For those who may be wondering what has happened to singer Jamie McMenemey who toured in the U.S. with Kornog, you will find his talents with a brush displayed on the jacket to this recording)

Skolvan. **Musique à danser**. Adipho AD1K7 01 (cassette only)

An instrumental group made up of veterans of the Breton music renaissance of the 70s and 80s: Youenn Le Bihan (bombarde, piston), Yann-Fañch Perroches (accordion), Gilles Le Bigot (guitar), and Fañch Landreau (fiddle, piano). Pieces include a variety of dances--laridé, gavotte, plinn, schottische...arranged and performed with creativity by masters.

Triskell. **Ondée**. Escalibur CD825.

A new recording by a well known group of Brittany centered around the Celtic harp of Pol and Hervé Quefféléant. Includes classical O'Carolan pieces as well as arrangements of contemporary Breton poetry.

Gilles Servat. **Mad in sérénité**. Ser 44007, SCA 300.

Gilles Servat became famous in the early 1970s as what was called a "chanteur engagé"--a militant singer who used song eloquently to speak of Brittany's political and cultural oppression by France. Servat has matured in technique and in his poetry to produce records of the 1980s. This one includes two texts in Breton.

Pierre Crépillon, Laurent Bigot and Patrick Molard. **Ar sac'h ler**. Escalibut CD826.

Three piping masters combine talents pairing bombarde with binioù koz and binioù bras ("cornemuse" = Scottish Highland bagpipes) and even play as a trio for dances and slower melodies. A high quality recording does justice to the artistic skills of these musicians (and those who have heard these instruments live know how painful it has sometimes been in the past to hear recordings which distort or at best only give a pale reflection of the music). The CD includes 12 selections in contrast to the 8 found on the cassette or record.

Note: information for the above notes has been drawn from **Musique Bretonne** (numbers 94 and 96) and **Ar Men** (number 22). More details on the content of recordings can be found in the reviews in these publications.

A New Bibliography

Lois Kuter

This summer, I was asked by the Western Societies Program of Cornell University to put together a basic bibliography for Brittany. This 36-page document is designed to present basic resources for the study of Brittany with an effort to include books or articles which give a solid introduction to particular subject areas. Also included are magazines and addresses for organizations which can be contacted for research.

There has been a bias towards works in the English language, although these are not always highly significant publications in the overall pool of materials. Most publications about Brittany are in French; English is still a very limited medium. While Breton has a growing literature, very few references are for Breton language materials. This is due to my own limitations with this language and the likelihood that most bibliography users will not know Breton. The bibliography is not intended to be an exhaustive guide to everything printed about Brittany, but it provides a good place to start research and should help people get beyond an initial stumbling block of locating information.

The bibliography has been broken down into the following general subject areas: Collections (various articles on a range of topics); General Resources (bibliographies, address lists, etc.); History; the Breton Movement; Ethnographic and Socio-Economic Studies; Emigration; Environment; Language and Literature (including: Historical and Linguistic Features of Breton, Sociolinguistic Studies, Breton Language and Bilingual Magazines and Publishers, Federations of Language Organizations, Gallo, Literature, Folklore and Oral Traditions); Music and Dance; Arts and Traditions (including: Painting, Sculpture and Ceramics, Architecture, Cinema and Photography, Costume, Cuisine); Sports; and Where to Find Breton Books.

Since the distribution of such a bibliography is a bit of an experiment for the Western Societies Program, there hasn't been a clear policy on its promotion or the establishment of a fee. Unless the demand becomes overwhelming the bibliography is available at no cost. Anyone interested in getting a copy should contact:

John Oakley
Western Societies Program
Cornell University
130 Uris Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

* * * * *

upcoming

One of the more practical features of **Bro Nevez** has been the reproduction of Breton catalogs we have included with each issue. So far we have included: Ar Falz/Skol Vreizh, Al Liamm, Dalc'homp Sonj!, Dastum, Emgleo Breiz, Keit Vimp Beo, Mouladurioù Hor Yezh, and the American book distributor Stephen Griffin.

Next issue will include: **Ar Men**

CATALOGS

Introduced by Lois Kuter

Dalc'homp Sonj is a magazine of Breton (and Celtic) history published on a quarterly basis since 1982. With each issue, this magazine has grown better and better with generous and high quality photographs, art reproductions, maps and drawings to supplement a highly readable text (in French, with some Breton). Averaging 45 pages per issue, **Dalc'homp Sonj** is packed with information on the ancient and contemporary history of Brittany, written by historians who write in a style which brings the material to life for those just beginning a study of Brittany while providing new details and interpretations to interest fellow scholars. Some topics in the past ten issues have included: Breton wrestling, druids, Breton architecture, Saunders Lewis, funerary art, early coins, workers' strikes in Fougères, the poet Yann-Ber Kalloc'h, Brittany's ties to Ireland, the French Revolution and Brittany, Welsh settlements in Patagonia, Scottish clans, Breton federalism, the writer and scholar Roparz Hemon, the coronation of Anne of Brittany, Brittany's ties to Flanders (from the 9th century to the present), and treasures in Breton libraries.

Besides six or seven major articles, each issue of **Dalc'homp Sonj** includes book reviews, a research question (and answer) column, letters (often as interesting as the articles which provoked them), and short notes on events in Brittany (museum exhibits, archeological digs, etc.)

A year's subscription is 120 francs (for overseas mailing plan to add another 20 or 30 francs to cover postage--or write for airmail postage expenses). For more information or to subscribe to this excellent history magazine contact:

Dalc'homp Sonj
36 rue Emile Zola
56100 An Oriant (Lorient)
Brittany (FRANCE)

Besides a remarkable magazine, **Dalc'homp Sonj** is an organization to promote the study of Breton history by making books on history and on Breton and Celtic culture more available. On the following pages are reprinted a catalog (from 1988). The quality of print is not always good due to the faintness of my original copy. Those interested in a more recent catalog are urged to contact the address above.

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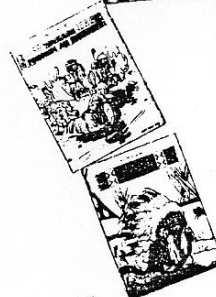


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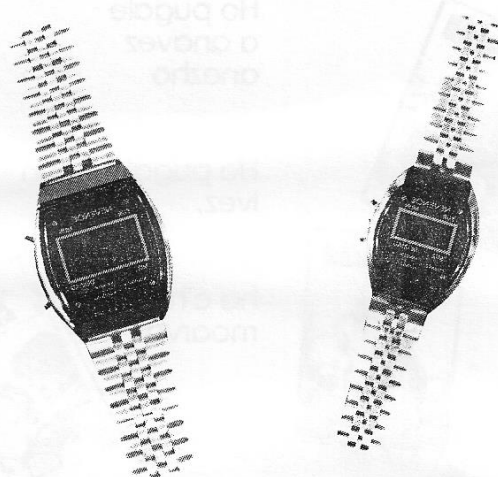
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CELTIC MATTERS

The following three articles (Douglas Hyde Foundation, Pan-Celtic Calendar, and Celtic New Year) were written by members of the Celtic League American Branch and are reproduced here in Bro Nevez for the benefit of those who are not members of that organization.

THE DOUGLAS HYDE FOUNDATION for Irish-Medium Education

Initial Policy Statement

The Douglas Hyde Foundation for Irish-Medium Education will be established this summer, and incorporated in the state of New York as a non-profit, grant-making, private foundation. It will be an independent organization, with no direct links to the Celtic League, other Irish-language organizations, or Irish-American groups.

The working name of the Foundation (for use in publicity, advertisements, etc.) will be **Gael Taca!**

Its purpose will be to support the use of Irish **as a community language** by funding Irish-medium educational projects, primarily in Ireland, but possibly elsewhere, if a **genuine** need exists.

Those projects could run from the pre-school level through university level, if a true Irish-medium university (perhaps modeled after Sabhal Mór Ostaig in Scotland) were to be established.

Grants could include funding for teachers salaries, learning aids (including videos), school supplies, school construction, administrative costs, and other educational activities directly related to the use of Irish as a community language.

A secondary goal of the Foundation will be to raise awareness in North America of the demand for Irish-medium education throughout Ireland, and the importance of the language revival in general.

The immediate goal of the Foundation will be to raise funds for the establishment of Irish-medium schools. The Foundation will select projects in Ireland it wants to support and will seek funding for those projects. If the situation arises, it will also fund Irish-medium educational projects not specifically chosen by the Foundation, but selected by a donor, or donors.

Grants will be awarded to educational projects on the basis of **need** and the possible **impact** the project may have on the revival of Irish as a community language. At present, support for Irish-medium elementary schools is considered particularly important.

Since the Foundation is still in its infancy, it will not accept applications for funding until after January 1, 1990. At that point it will begin to consider making grants to specific projects, as funds become available. However, we encourage educational projects that wish to receive funding to send information on their activities to the Foundation **now**. The better informed we are, the better we'll be able to publicize the demand for Irish-medium education.

A few educational projects particularly worthy of funding have already been recommended to the Foundation. They include: construction of a permanent building to house Gaelscoil na bhFál, Belfast; payment of a teacher's salary at the Irish primary school in Newry, Co. Down; the establishment of Irish primary schools elsewhere in Northern Ireland; and help with administrative costs for Irish-medium schools in the Republic of Ireland that have not been recognized by the Irish government.

An advisory Committee will be set up in Ireland to assist the Foundation. The Committee's primary role will be to identify projects that are in need of funding and supply information on those projects to the Foundation in the U.S. It will also draw up an advisory document on funding priorities for the Foundation.

Since the Foundation was set up at the request of the Council for Irish-Medium Education in Belfast, its U.S. directors initially suggested that the Council serve as an Advisory Committee. However, the Council wanted to open the Committee to other language organizations in Ireland. Therefore, the Committee will be comprised of: two members of the Council for Irish-medium Education, two representatives from Gaeilscoileanna in Dublin, two representatives of Conradh na Gaeilge, with provision for two additional members to be picked by the Committee. (We suggest that the two additional members be well-known language activists or celebrities who could publicize the aims of the Foundation in Ireland.) The Foundation suggests that Feilim O hAdhmaill be one of the two representatives of the Council for Irish-Medium Education serving on the Committee.

The Advisory Committee will also approach persons in Ireland who may wish to serve as "patrons" of the Foundation. The Foundation has already been endorsed by Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich in Ireland, and by civil-rights lawyer Paul O'Dwyer in New York. A list of potential patrons whose endorsement would gain the Foundation recognition in the U.S. will be sent to the Committee in the near future. The Foundation also requests that the Committee send it a list of potential patrons for the Foundation's approval.

At first, it will not be necessary for the Foundation to have a permanent office in Ireland. Indeed, it will not have a permanent office in New York in the short-term. In the meantime, the Advisory Committee should choose one of its members as "chief liaison" with the Foundation in the U.S., and continue to supply the Foundation with information on the language revival in general and on Irish-medium educational projects in particular.

The initial contacts for the Foundation in the U.S. are Fionnbarra O Brolchain, Seosamh Mac Bhloscaigh, and Liam O Caiside. They can be contacted by writing to:

Gael Taca!
c/o The Celtic League American Branch
P.O. Box 20153
Dag Hammarskjold Postal Center
New York, NY 10019 U.S.A.

* * * * *

PAN-CELTIC CALENDAR REACHES 10TH YEAR MILESTONE

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Celtic League Calendar, published by the Celtic League American Branch. This exciting calendar is unique in two ways-- first and foremost it celebrates the Celtic year, which begins November 1st, because Hallowe'en (31 October) is in fact Celtic New Year's Eve. Second it is a **pan**-Celtic calendar observing dates and events important to the Celtic world as a whole and dates of specific importance to the six modern Celtic nations, Scotland, Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, and the Isle of Mann.

The original description of the Celtic Calendar was "an Old World calendar for New World Celts", which it still is. But it is also "an historical and mythological calendar", as there are important historical entries of all kinds in the date boxes.

The artwork by Patrick Wynne and Mercy Van Vlack alternate with each month and illustrate Celtic mythology with creativity, beauty and style.

"Custom, tradition, and folklore support the authenticity of our calendar," says the Celtic League. The Celts based their year, not on Julian or Gregorian years as the English or French do, but on their ancient culture and agrarian way of life. The Celtic Calendar, which starts on 1 November 1989 and runs to 31 October 1990, gives special attention to the four quarterly "feasts", each of which represents a different phase of the pastoral year. These four feasts are still celebrated in varying degrees and in various ways in the Celtic nations of Scotland, Brittany, Wales, Ireland, Cornwall, and the Isle of Mann, and also in the United States.

This tenth anniversary edition is a wonderful combination of "roots" and contemporary Celtic consciousness as it focuses in on the six modern Celtic nations by giving some of their history, mythology, languages, and location. The map on the back of the calendar shows where they are situated on the fringe of Europe. And also, the days of the week and the months of the year are given for all six Celtic languages.

This innovative Celtic Calendar is available for \$6 post paid from:

Celtic League Calendar
2973 Valentine Avenue
Bronx, NY 10458

* * * * *

CELTIC NEW YEAR

The eve of November 1st, the most important feast in the Celtic year, marks both the beginning of the New Year and the beginning of winter. According to ancient Celtic thought, all existence arises out of the interplay between darkness and light, night and day, cold and heat, death and life, and the unfolding of the years is seen as an alternation between dark periods (**giamos**, winter) and light periods (**samos**, summer, beginning on May 1st). But, in the Celtic view, darkness comes before light, night gives birth to day, summer grows out of winter, so the year begins with winter, the dark half. A Celtic calendar from Coligny (eastern France), dating back to the 1st century A.D., refers to a festival called the **Trinoux Samonia** ("Three Nights of the End of Summer") which is undoubtedly at the origin of the many rituals and observances recorded throughout Celtic history in association with November Eve--and still, to some extent, alive today in the Christianized context of All Hallow's Eve or Hallowe'en.

In the modern Celtic world, the Gaelic languages (Irish, Scottish, Manx) still refer to the New Year as **Samhain**, "Summer's End". In Welsh the same feast is called **Calan Gaeaf** (corresponding to **Calan Gwaf** in Cornish and **Kala-Goanv** in Breton), meaning "First Day of Winter". But everywhere the traditions related to the celebration of the feast are similar, pointing to their origin in the common Celtic heritage.

A bonfire served as the focal point for the festivities. All household fires were extinguished and then solemnly relit from this one central fire, blessed by the Druids. In the earliest days animals were sacrificed to insure that the spark of fertility within the earth would not vanish during the coming dark time.

The most important aspect of the Celtic New Year, however, was the interruption of the time-stream which was perceived to occur then, allowing communication

between this world and the Otherworld. The dead could return to the places where they had lived, and, as a result, many of the New Year rituals focused on the need to provide hospitality for dead ancestors. Food for the dead was put out ceremoniously, either indoors or outdoors. Gates and windows were left unlocked to give the dead free passage. Together with the spirits of dead humans, swarms of fairy beings poured into our world on November Eve, and could be invoked by witches working spells on that night. Not all of these creatures were friendly: jack-o-lanterns were carved out of turnips to simulate spirit-guardians, and were placed at the doors of houses to keep out unwelcomed visitors from the Otherworld.

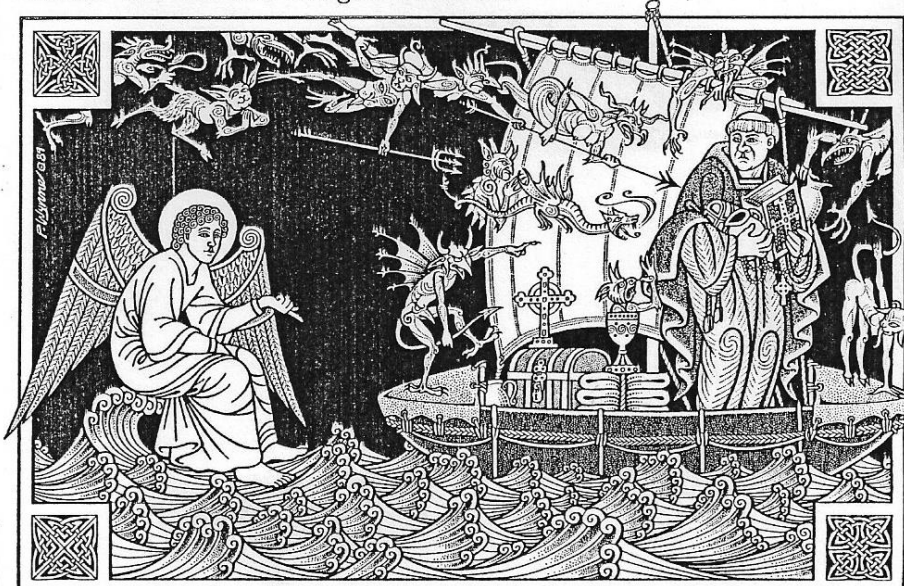
There was also a much lighter side to the New Year rituals. Young people would put on strange disguises and roam about the countryside, pretending to be the returning dead or creatures of the Otherworld. The break in reality which occurred on November Eve was felt to not only provide links between the worlds but to dissolve the structures of society for the duration of the night. Boys and girls would put on each other's clothes, and would generally flout convention by boisterous behavior and by playing tricks on their elders and social betters.

Divination concerning events of the coming year was another prominent feature of the holiday, and often involved hazelnuts, symbols of wisdom. Bobbing for apples, also a traditional Celtic New Year pastime, was a reference to the "Paradise of Apples" (**Emhain Abhlach** or **Afallon**) where the dead, having eaten of the sacred fruit, enjoyed a blissful immortality.

Behind all these customs and beliefs one can discern a myth expressing the central meaning of the feast. A winter-god and a summer-god (or winter and summer aspects of the same god) compete for the favours of the Goddess of the Land. On May 1st the summer-god is victorious, but on November 1st the winter-god—who is, among other things, the Lord of the Dead—comes back into his own. Often the winter-god is depicted with antlers which, like a stag, he sheds yearly. In parts of western Brittany the coming of winter is still heralded by the baking of **kornigou**, little cakes in the shape of antlers, to commemorate the god's shedding of his "cuckold" horns as returns to his kingdom in the Otherworld.

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from: The Celtic League Calendar



THE ISLAND OF THE MONK OF TORACHI — As they sail on the seas of the Otherworld, Mael Duin and his companions come upon an island inhabited by a monk who had fled his native land with stolen treasure. He is plagued by demons until, on the advice of an Otherworld being, he throws the treasure overboard and establishes his hermitage on the island he had reached.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR Lois KUTER

605 MONTGOMERY ROAD
AMBLER ,PA 19 002

BREIZH AMERICA
Association loi du 1^{er} Juillet 1901
Siège : Restaurant "LE RANCHO"
Route du Conquet - 29263 LOCMARIA PLOUZANE

LE 20 OCTOBRE 1989

Cher Monsieur,

Monsieur Jean DAGORN et moi-même avons décidé de remettre en valeur l'association BREIZH AMERICA et de lui donner un nouvel essor

A cette intention, nous prenons contact avec vous afin d'échanger un ensemble d'idées très rapidement compte tenu que le bureau de de l'association va être revu

Il serait judicieux que vous en fassiez état dans le prochain numéro de BROZ NEVEZ dont vous êtes éditeur

Nous avons également l'intention de créer un bulletin de liaison entre les U.S.A et la Bretagne. De ce fait, toutes demandes culturelles commerciales, immobilières, échanges divers etc.....pourront dorénavant se faire en s'adressant à MR THOMAS Rene Le Bignon 56 350 Saint VINCENT sur OUST

Ceci, bien entendu, n'est qu'une prise de contact et dès le mois prochain nous vous adresserons de plus amples informations

A vous lire prochainement

Sincerely yours

A greiz a galon-vad Kenavo

MR THOMAS

P-S Voudriez-vous m'adresser une liste assez complète d'amis bretons et américains intéressés par par l'association BREIZH AMERICA
Liste à envoyer à l'adresse ci-dessus

BREIZH AMERICA

Association loi du 1^{er} Juillet 1901

Siège : Restaurant "LE RANCHO"

Route du Conquet - 29263 LOCMARIA PLOUZANÉ

Cher compatriote et ami,

La Presse bretonne a récemment mis en évidence la création de l'Association **Breizh America** (Le Télégramme, Ouest-France, et Radio Bretagne Ouest).

Les multiples buts de cette association (loi 1901), justifient la création si bien accueillie par les milieux bretons.

1) Voici les **principaux objectifs** de Breizh America :

- Entraide des bretons ayant résidé en Amérique ;
- Création de liens avec ceux qui y résident toujours ;
- Echanges culturels et professionnels entre la Bretagne et les pays d'Outre-Atlantique.

2) Les **moyens d'action** de l'Association seront :

- Bulletin de liaison de Breizh America ;
- Réunions et conférences ;
- Voyages d'amitié et de reconnaissance ;
- Une caisse de secours.

3) Le **bulletin de liaison** Breizh America diffusé en Bretagne et aux U S A (parution mensuelle prévue) comportera une partie importante réservée aux annonces intéressant la vie économique,

- Offres d'emplois ;
- Demandes et offres de représentation commerciale ;
- Ventes et achats de commerces et d'immobiliers ;
- Echanges de séjours familiaux pour les enfants et les jeunes souhaitant perfectionner leurs connaissances.

4) Les **voyages d'amitié** Breizh America en collaboration avec Air France et Panamerican Air Line seront de courte durée (une semaine environ).

Bien entendu, c'est avec plaisir que le Comité de Direction de l'association Breizh America accueillera toute suggestion ou information de la part des adhérents.

Rejoignez nos rangs !

Pour adhérer à BREIZH-AMERICA, il vous suffit de retourner le bulletin d'adhésion en joignant le chèque correspondant au type de cotisation choisi.

Sincerely yours
A galon-vad, ha kenavo

Jean DAGORN,
Président



TEERE ha TAVAZ

tregrill · dean · menhenlot · liskeard · kernow



November 1st, 1989

Dear Dr Kuter,

I was interested to read Joseph Ó Callahan's article on Cornish in the August issue of BRO NEVEZ which has just come my way.

The position and nature of the Cornish language this century has been greatly misunderstood and also on many occasions so misrepresented that it is often difficult to convince the world of the truth. The subject is really too vast for the confines of a reader's letter, yet you would be doing the Cornish people a service if you could let this truth be known.

I enclose the major part of a letter recently sent to Peninsula Voice (a dynamic periodical representing the far west of Cornwall) which sums up the position in as concise a manner as possible in the circumstances, and the contents of which I should dearly love to be known to your readers.

It cannot be stated often enough that of the **four** (yes, four!) types of Cornish currently in use : 'Unified Cornish' (designed by Morton Nance in 1925), 'Phonemic Cornish', also sometimes calling itself 'Common Cornish' (designed by Kenneth George c.1986), 'Rod Lyon's Cornish' (not actually given a name, but which is a version of 'Unified' with Rod's own improvements), and finally the Cornish of the last period in the history of the living language which was referred to by writers of the 18th century as **Modern Cornish**...only the last named is not the creation of an individual in the 20th century, but the language in the state in which it was spoken and written by Cornish people of the day.

Modern Cornish (mostly referred to in 20th century books as 'Late Cornish'), has had a very bad press, it being frequently stated to be "corrupt". Its critics in the past , as at present, have completely failed to study it, and one opinion follows another, parrot fashion.

One simple instance of its misrepresentation is that the words used in the title of the tale of 'Jowan Chy an Horth', as listed by Joseph Ó Callahan in his article, were in the original version of Nicholas Boson (17th century) spelt as **Jooan Chei a Horr**. 'Jowan Chy an Horth' is a theoretical re-spelling by Nance who also ruined the language of the original story by transposing it into his own devised 'Unified Cornish', and then using this as the basis for the launching of 'Unified' in 1925 in his book 'Cornish For All'.

I have now been researching Modern Cornish for some ten years. When I began, I thought the task would be simple, but there turned out to be very much more material than I had imagined. It was not until 1986 therefore that I set up **Teere ha Tavaz** (Land and Language), an organization one of whose aims is to present Modern Cornish to the public, though Mediaeval Cornish will also be researched when the present task is complete. The basic rule of Teere ha Tavaz is that nothing shall be presented that is not authentic, and this applies to grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. A most important point to note is that Modern Cornish is the only form of our language for which a detailed study has ever been made of its orthography and pronunciation while it was still a living language , the author of that study being Edward Lhuyd in 1707. Thus Modern Cornish is the only form of our language that has a complete and intact system.

A dictionary and grammar of Modern Cornish are currently being put together. The dictionary is now in its final draft.

Finally I must add that the tradition of the Cornish language lingered on much longer than is commonly supposed. The fatal attraction that Dolly Pentreath seems to have on people's minds as having been the last native speaker

is not supported by reality. Paul Therriss, a retired policeman who had been brought up in Newlyn in West Cornwall, and used to go to sea with some old fishermen when he was around 17 years of age, spoke in 1935 to Arthur Rablen, a philologist researching the western dialect, and informed him that the fishermen that he had gone to sea with used to speak Cornish together while at sea, keeping up conversations for as long as ten minutes at a time. Since Therriss was a local man, he surely knew that what the men were speaking was not just dialect. This would have been around 1875.

Fish were still counted in Cornish by some fishermen as late as 1935, and only last week I received information about two old ladies still living who remember hearing the cry "Hunch hei boree!" at the launching of the boats. This is pure Cornish for "Heave her now!", even if the verb is a late borrowing from English. The oral transmission of this phrase as late as 1989 is phenomenal.

It must be emphasised that **Modern Cornish** is a much more complete language than people realise. Its dictionary will contain some 7,000 entries, compared with less than 9,000 in Nance's 'Unified' dictionaries for all periods of the language. Its grammar allows one to say all that is necessary, and in much simpler form than either the authentic Mediaeval Cornish (no longer used in its authentic state) or the contrived forms of 'Unified', 'Phonemic' or their derivatives. Modern Cornish is unique in having a verified system of pronunciation that does not have to rely on theory. This letter could as easily have been written to you in Modern Cornish.

There is so much more that could be said on the subject, but I know that space does not permit.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Gendall

Richard Gendall

The following is the letter referred to above that Richard Gendall requested be printed in Bro Nevez. I have retyped it to make it easier to read, but otherwise the text is unchanged from the copy he provided us. LK

... The general public can be excused for not knowing much about the Cornish language, and for being confused by what they do know. But, Cornish was, after all, the language of our quite recent ancestors in Penwith and Kerrier, and it may be seen about us daily on our signposts.

Teere ha Tavaz (Land and Language) was founded in 1986, and is an organization deeply involved in researching and encouraging all genuine Cornish traditions, whether these are to do with customs, music, mythology, dance or any other aspect. The Cornish language is a major part of our activities, and in this also we are hard at work researching and presenting the **traditional Cornish** as it was last used by our ancestors.

Most people will certainly never have heard of **traditional Cornish**. Of those who most certainly should have heard of it must be included all those who regard themselves either as students or fluent users of Cornish, and in particular those members of the Cornish Language Board and any member of the Cornish Gorsyth who is a language bard.

Here, unfortunately, the expected is overtaken by the unexpected, for I have yet to meet a Bard of the Gorsyth or member of the Language Baord who has taken the trouble to find out anything at all about **traditional Cornish** except at a superficial level; unless it is someone who is also a member of **Teere ha Tavaz** or a sympathiser with its activities.

Indeed, the extent of the ignorance among the body that sets itself up as the custodian and final arbiter of the Cornish language, the **Cornish language Board**, is so great that its members frequently refer to "Dick Gendall's Cornish" for that form of our language that I am researching, whereas in fact this is none other than the Cornish that was used by the native Cornish speakers and writers of the last two centuries of its active life.

Not content with failing to take the trouble to learn this form of our language, or even to learn about it, many opponents of **traditional Cornish** do not even understand the terms they themselves use in their misinformed and misplaced arguments. Thus we find people claiming that forms of Cornish that have actually been concocted this century, such as "Unified Cornish" and "Phonemic Cornish", are "traditional". This is a contradiction in terms. A tradition is something handed down from person to person. In terms of language, the traditional form can only be the latest form of the living tongue...No other form can be said to have been handed down, because the last man in the line, so to speak, is the last one who receives that tradition, which brings us to the Cornish used in the 18th and even the 19th century. Neither "Unified" nor "Phonemic" will have anything to do with this **traditional Cornish**, so how can their supporters claim their own form as "traditional"?

A term used frequently for **traditional Cornish** is **late Cornish**, which is entirely accurate, for aite it is compared with mediaeval Cornish of the early Tudor period and beyond.

However, the name given to **traditional Cornish** by those who lived when it was still in common use was **Modern Cornish**. Dr. Edward Lhuyd, William Gwavas, Thomas Tonkin and others all referred to the Cornish of the early 18th century as **Modern Cornish**. This is the very Cornish that **Teere ha Tavaz** is teaching! Unfortunately, the Language Board also employs the term "Modern Cornish" when referring to its own "Phonemic Cornish", a use both anachronistic and inaccurate.

If opponents of the work done at **Teere ha Tavaz** took the trouble to read Lhuyd, Gwavas, Tonkin, Rowe, Pendar, Jenkins, the Bosons, etc., they would then discover this "Dick Gendall's Cornish", as they like to call it, with its grammar, vocabulary and orthography intact, as used by those native writers themselves. Admittedly one or two neologisms have to be used when the language is required to express new concepts, but this is a problem shared by "Unified" and "Phonemic" also. But what is very much to the point is that they would find themselves reading the directions for orthography and pronunciation written by the only person in the history of our language that has ever made a proper study of these while Cornish was still a living tongue: and that was Edward Lhuyd in his Cornish Grammar of 1707. Thus the only form of Cornish for which there are indisputable indications as to the pronunciation is the late form...**traditional**, or **Modern Cornish**. Any pronunciation system based on mediaeval Cornish can only be theory, and that applies to "Phonemic" Cornish.

There is an injustice here: In 1925 Morton Nance launched his "Unified" Cornish, a hotch-potch of the language from the early Middle Ages to the 18th century, written in an invented spelling system, and given a muddled pronunciation guide. In 1986 the Cornish Language Board launched Dr. George's "Phonemic" Cornish, essentially a corrected form of "Unified", but itself written in yet another invented orthography on the advice of a computer.

The Cornish Language Board, using "Phonemic" Cornish, is currently at loggerheads with the Cornish Gorseth, using "Unified" Cornish, and represents itself with the Cornwall County Council, the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, the EEC and so on as the sole official referee on matters relating to Cornish. Originally financed by the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, then by generous private gifts, and ultimately by public grants, the Language Board does not lack for ready cash to proceed with its work on a concocted form of the language that, like "Unified", has not been recognized by scholars of international repute. True, it has arrangements with the Cornwall Education Authority over the teaching and examining of Cornish at school level. Indeed, I myself was the first Chief Moderator for

the CSE Examinations in Cornish, as also chief examiner for the Language Board before I began my researches into traditional Cornish. However, the Cornwall Education Authority, with all due respect, is as yet unaware of what the present Language Board actually represents, and until next week, as I write (October 26, 1989), will not have heard of **Teere ha Tavaz**.

"Unified" Cornish and its offspring, "Phonemic" Cornish have had virtually the whole of the present century to reach the position that they now find themselves in. Research into **traditional, Modern Cornish** began in the 1970's, but as there proved to be very much more material on the subject than had ever seemed probable, it was not until 1986 that it was possible to launch **Teere ha Tavaz** as a group dedicated to present our traditional language to the Cornish public. The unexpectedly large volume of material is also the reason why the long-promised dictionary and grammar of **Modern Cornish** has been delayed. **Teere ha Tavaz** meanwhile is run entirely without public funding, and its publications are sold at cost price. Of the courses and various publications so far produced, one course alone has since 1988 sold over 200 copies, and there are already over 30 members of the newly formed social circle, **Tro Teere ha Tavaz**, formed for those particularly interested in learning to speak the language. **Teere ha Tavaz** has already one student on an honours degree course at university, and a second research student assigned to it, which is not a bad record after hardly more than three years.

Sad to say, certain members of the Language Board have attempted to denigrate our work. Dr. George, designer of "Phonemic" Cornish, recently included in a report made to a certain official body the admonition: "...work being done by Richard Gendall on the language should be treated with suspicion." While this statement should really be treated as libellous, its sheer ignorance robs one of intention... for we are to understand that the Cornish of our own ancestors in the 17th and 18th centuries is not to be trusted!

Yours,

Richard Gendall

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am sure I speak for all ICDBL members in wishing Richard Gendall well in his research and work for the Cornish language. I imagine I also speak for many readers in expressing the wish that Mr. Gendall could have used more space to describe "Modern Cornish" and less space in defending his version of "the truth". It has always amazed me that Celts seem so ready to find enemies first among those who share their dreams of creating a future for their language and culture instead of among the government officials and administrators who have worked for centuries to destroy the Celtic languages and cultures. If some of the tremendous energy Celts have used to belittle each other's ideas of "the truth" was directed towards working for more resources to support research, teaching, and media use of Celtic languages and arts, people would not need to talk so much about survival.

I find letters like that of Richard Gendall very discouraging. I am reasonably open-minded and have no reason to take sides in controversy concerning the "proper" promotion of Cornish. I hope that future letters directed to **Bro Nevez** will be written in a spirit of respect for all those who work for the future of Celtic languages and with respect for our readers who are sincerely interested in learning more about Celtic languages, their research, and work to promote them. **Lois Kuter**